



Lines & Leads

THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

CPAT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS RECOGNIZED



County Executive Baker, Council Chair Turner and IAFF Local 1619 President Pantelis assisted Acting Chief Bashoor in presenting the awards.

In making the presentation to the sworn and civilian members that administered CPAT, Acting Chief Bashoor stated, "You have played a key role in the facilitation and success of CPAT and the improvement of the Department's recruitment and hiring process. It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the outstanding effort you have put forth and the dedication you have invested toward the CPAT administration and ultimately the entire Fire/EMS Department. The enthusiasm and professionalism that you have displayed is exceptional and I commend your hard work, as well as your willingness to accept additional responsibilities above and beyond your normal duties. He concluded the presentation by saying, "Your dedication and commitment to excellence is the basis for improving the Department and the services we provide. Please accept my sincere appreciation for your participation with the CPAT administration process."

Prior to the March 24th Promotional Ceremony (See: Fire Chief Comments, Page 3), awards of appreciation were presented to Department personnel involved in the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) administration.

Chief Ray and the Anne Arundel County Fire Department for allowing us to use their CPAT facility and course. We have already seen the impact of CPAT administration by our hiring the best candidates for the position of Fire Fighter/Medic."

Acting Fire Chief Bashoor recognized Fire Chief John Ray and the Arundel County Fire Department for allowing the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department to use their CPAT site in Millersville. Chief Bashoor presented Chief Ray with a plaque and stated, "It is with grateful appreciation and mutual respect that I acknowledge

The Department was granted a Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) Program License by the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) to administer the CPAT for the purpose of testing the physical capability of firefighter candidates. Since being granted that license last year, the Department has processed approximately 600 candidates.

A NEW BOMB UNIT ARRIVES FOR PGFD

Information and photo courtesy of C.W. Williams Fire Equipment Specialists

The Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department's Bomb Squad recently received a new response truck. Built by Rosenbauer, it is one of six delivered through a contract with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) for Bomb Squad vehicles. The procurement process was handled by Arlington County, VA whose Fire Department also received one of the units.



Each of the trucks is powered by a Spartan Metro Star ER chassis and is equipped with a Cummins ISL 425 hp engine and Allison EVS3000 transmission. The bodies are constructed from 3/16 inch thick formed aluminum and measure 27 feet in length. An interior command center is located in the forward area of the body and will house a wide array of audio/visual equipment along with desk, chair and storage provisions. Ramps allow the remote controlled robot and equipment carts stored in the body to be deployed from either side. An electric operated awning that spans the length of the body will offer protection during inclement or hot weather. The body also carries explosive containment lockers. Additional storage is available on roof-top compartments which are reached by a Safe Step ladder on the back of the body.

A 20kW Generator supplies power to a light tower, two electrical reels, and multiple outlets located throughout the vehicle. A camera is mounted on 25' telescoping mast located behind the cab and provides data to 4 monitors in the command center and a digital recorder.

PRODUCED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT

RUSHERN L. BAKER, III
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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ACTING CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

MARC S. BASHOOR
ACTING FIRE CHIEF

JEFFREY L. CALLAWAY
EDITOR

SUSAN L. TAYLOR
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

WE ARE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

PRINCE GEORGE'S HIGHLIGHTS: Our Facilities and Equipment

COLLEGE PARK VFD

During a January 1925 community meeting, residents of the growing community of College Park decided to organize a fire company. A committee was appointed to draft a Constitution and By-Laws and The College Park Volunteer Fire Department (CPVFD) was born.

In March 1925, fourteen members elected Dr. Henry B. McDonnell the first Fire Chief. Chief McDonnell was Chairman of the Chemistry Department at the University of Maryland. Through his connection, a hand drawn hose reel and a two wheel soda acid extinguisher were acquired. A horse-drawn hose wagon was purchased from the District of Columbia Fire Department, and a used 1921 Atlas truck chassis was purchased from the Connecticut Pie Company.



The volunteers worked out of a barn at Captain Crisp's residence on Harvard Avenue (now 7400 Rhode Island Avenue). The Company was officially placed in service on November 1, 1925, and made its first response on December 13, 1925. During the first year of service, the Department responded to twenty-one alarms.

The need for a firehouse came to the attention of Mr. Elmore Power, one of the early developers of College Park. Mr. Power donated property at 4813 Calvert Road. The first station building was finished in August 1926. Discussions began in the late 1930s to erect a new fire station and fire training facility. This led to the construction of the second fire house at 7507 Baltimore Avenue. After many years of hard work and planning, CPVFD moved to the current quarters at 8115 Baltimore Avenue in 1994.



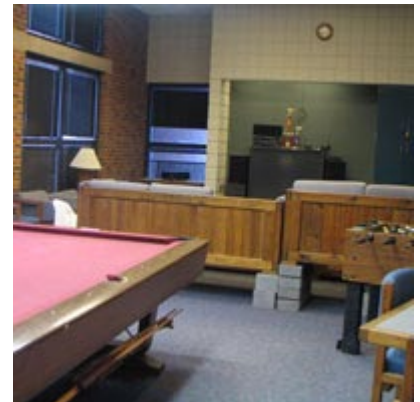
COLLEGE PARK COMMUNITY STATION 812:

Located at 8115 Baltimore Avenue, Station 812 sits directly across from the University of Maryland campus. The station was constructed under a joint venture between the University of Maryland, Prince George's County, and the CPVFD. More than three times the size of the previous station, it houses two Class A engines, a ladder truck, a foam engine, a BLS ambulance, an ALS ambulance, a utility truck, and antique pumper.

Features include two brass fire poles, an advanced alerting system, and student dormitory facilities. The bays are flanked by a watchdesk, which is the heart of station operations, as well as a shop and storage area. Offices for the Chiefs, Executive Committee, career Captain, and paramedic staff, as well as a conference room, are also on the first floor.

Sleeping quarters are located directly above the apparatus bays. Designed like a college dorm, the John L. Bryan Fire Service Dormitory provides one and two person rooms for up to twenty full time student residents. In the south wing there are three additional bunkrooms. Across from the bunkrooms are large men's and women's locker facilities. The north wing has a well-equipped exercise room, laundry facility and study room.

In the center of the second floor is the Theodore "T.C." Clarke Training and Meeting Room. Mainly used for company meetings and classes, it can seat sixty and is equipped with white boards and audio-visual equipment. Two brass fire poles ensure our members have quick access from the second floor to the bays.



A MESSAGE FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

On March 24th, the Fire/EMS Department was honored when County Executive Rushern L. Baker and Prince George's County Council Chair Ingrid M. Turner joined us to recognize the 85 sworn personnel who achieved promotions over the last 18 months. Both Baker and Turner addressed a standing-room-only crowd at Florian Hall with messages of strong support for our continued mission. I wish to thank Local 1619 President Andy Pantelis for hosting this year's event.

Congratulations go out to the 85 sworn personnel who were invited to receive certificates of promotion this round. Thank you also to the multitude of Department personnel and family members who turned out in record numbers to support their co-workers during this, the first official Departmental event of County Executive Baker's tenure. I look forward to the pleasure of announcing the promotion of even more of our personnel at future events.

Since my appointment as Acting Fire Chief, I have received a number of excellent suggestions on things we can do to enhance our career recruitment efforts. Your suggestions have included reaching out to military families who will be relocating to the Metropolitan region during the implementation of the Federal Government's Military Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Initiative, and increasing campus recruitment tours at the many Universities and Colleges located throughout the State of Maryland.

Two months ago, in direct response to your excellent suggestions, I tasked Lt. Colonel Angela Peden to have her staff develop a comprehensive plan to expand our recruitment efforts. The specific directives provided were to; expand face-to-face marketing opportunities; promote gender and ethnic diversity in all recruitment efforts; and incorporate social networking into future recruitment initiatives. These proposals are intended to ensure that we will attract the widest possible pool of the best and brightest candidates to take part in our upcoming testing opportunities. Believing that we have a multitude of untapped potential right here in our community, I have also asked Lt. Colonel Peden to incorporate components that will improve our recruitment efforts at home in Prince George's County.

Under the management of Dr. Sylvia Franklin, the staff in Human Resources has created a strategic plan and timeline to deliver these objectives. The plan is currently under review by each of the commands. For those of you who have ideas and suggestions on how we can make our recruitment outreach better, I am asking you for your personal involvement in this effort. I invite you to forward any suggestions you have for enhancing the process to me, Lt. Colonel Peden and Dr. Franklin via e-mail no later than April 21, 2011. As a professional courtesy, please also be sure to include the managers within your Chain-of-Command in any correspondence you send. Together we can assure that we will attract the best and the brightest candidates to become part of our elite fire and emergency medical corps.

An event was held at the Cranford/Graves Fire Services Building in Landover Hills on March 24th to induct new members into the Fire Chiefs Hall of Fame, unveil the portraits of two of our Past Chiefs and present the 2010 Special Achievement Award. Our Hall of Fame was created last year to specifically honor and recognize the outstanding achievements realized through "Encore Careers" that have been undertaken by our retired leadership. Through this program, we recognize those individuals who have continued to serve the public above and beyond the multitude of years they each served PGFD.

I believe one of the best means to measure the quality of leadership in this Department is witnessed in the consistent desire of Fire and Emergency Medical Service agencies throughout the region -- and across America -- to seek out and hire the veteran personnel of PGFD into their leadership positions. I think it is proper and fitting that this Department provide suitable honor and recognition to the people who have enhanced the National reputation of Prince George's County and PGFD.

The 2011 inductees are Randall L. Shank and Greg B. Cade. Shank retired from the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department in 2003 after having served the citizens and residents for 21 years. He was hired by the Loudoun County Department of Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Management where he is currently serving as Deputy Chief of Operations. Cade had a 24-year career with the Fire/EMS Department before retiring and serving as Fire Chief in Hampton Roads Virginia Beach, VA. In 2007, Cade received a Presidential Appointment as the United States Fire Administrator. He currently serves as the Division Director of Government Affairs for the National Fire Protection Association.

Portraits of Past Fire Chiefs Lawrence H. Sedgwick and Eugene A. Jones were also unveiled and added to the Past Chiefs Portrait Gallery at the Cranford/Graves Fire Services Building. Chiefs Sedgwick and Jones each served the Department and the citizens of Prince George's County admirably through some of our most challenging times. On behalf of the Department, I thank them both for their distinguished service.

It was also my distinct honor to recognize Battalion Chief Denice Dickens, who was selected to receive the Special Achievement Award for 2010 by Past Chief Eugene Jones. The award was presented to Denice for her work as the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer and other associated duties in assisting the Fire Chief in the performance of his duties. Congratulations Denice.

On Monday, March 28, 2011, I was pleased to take part in the first day of instruction for the 43rd class of firefighter/medic recruits at the Department's Fire/EMS Training Academy in Cheltenham. The Fire/EMS Department's Senior Command Staff, Majors and civilian managers greeted 35 recruits on their opening day. For the first time in recent history, our Training Academy is instructing not one - but two - recruit classes, with a total of sixty-two personnel.

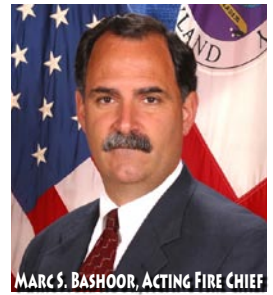
The recruits of Career Recruit School 43 (CRS 43) are at the beginning of an intense, physically challenging and educational 16 week course of study where they will receive instruction in basic fire fighting, emergency medical services, hazardous materials, general orders and the standard operating procedures of the Department. Please join me in welcoming them to our ranks.

Following the opening session with CRS 43, I also took the opportunity to join the men and women of CRS 42 in their first live fire evolutions at the Academy's burn building. It was a personal pleasure to be able to provide both didactic and live instruction assistance to this fine group of recruits. This was also an opportunity to put a quote attributed to the Greek Philosopher Aristotle into practice; "We are, what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but it is a habit."

Stay Safe,



Marc S. Bashoor, Acting Fire Chief



OUR PEOPLE: Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

Graham, Jiron receive American Legion EMS and Fire Fighter of the Year Awards

The Prince George's County Council of the American Legion, Department of Maryland, Inc., selected Paramedic Pamela J. Graham as the American Legion, Prince George's County and the Southern Maryland District Council "2010 Career EMS of the Year."

Additionally, Fire Fighter/Medic (Acting) Captain James M. Jiron was selected as the American Legion, Prince George's County and the Southern Maryland District Council "2010 Career Fire Fighter of the Year."

The award notification letters state, "Paramedic Graham and Captain Jiron have an impressive resume, and their service to your department and to Prince George's County is outstanding." The pair will receive their awards at two functions; one will be held for the county level and the other for the district level."

Acting Fire Fighter/Medic Captain James M. Jiron was selected for his actions in September 2010. While off-duty and without hesitation or concern for his own safety, he prevented injuries and perhaps saved two lives in Woodstock, Virginia. Captain Jiron entered a burning home, where he alerted and removed two occupants who were unaware their home was on fire. He was also recently selected as the Knights of Columbus Fire Fighter of the Year for 2010 and will be receiving a Fire/EMS Department Valor Award. Acting Captain Jiron is currently assigned to College Park Fire/EMS Station #812.

Paramedic Graham was selected for her exceptional performance in 2010 when she was credited with five "saves" within a three-month period. It was also noted that Pam is currently enrolled in higher learning college courses, as well as avid community involvement. Paramedic Graham is also being considered for the American Legion, State of Maryland "2010 EMS of the Year" award. She is currently assigned to the Paramedic Unit at Clinton Fire/EMS Station #825.

Acting Fire Chief Marc S. Bashoor commented, "The performance of our men and women of the Fire/EMS Department never cease to amaze me. Our personnel, career and volunteer, on a daily basis provide the very best fire and EMS to the citizens of Prince George's County. I am pleased that an organization like the American Legion not only recognizes these high qualities in our personnel, but also takes time to acknowledge them. The actions of Graham and Jiron reflect favorably upon them both personally and professionally, as well as on the entire Fire/EMS Department."



County Executive Rushern L. Baker, III Cordially Invites
All Prince George's County Employees to Attend the

Prince George's County Public Safety Luncheon

Honoring
THE 34TH ANNUAL
VALOR AWARD RECIPIENTS

POLICE • SHERIFF • FIRE/EMS • CORRECTIONS • HOMELAND SECURITY

APRIL 27, 2011
11:30 a.m.

Martin's Crosswinds
7400 Greenway Center Drive, Greenbelt, MD 20770
Hosted by Fox 5 News

Employee Cost: \$40 per person / \$400 Table
For Reservations, Call:
301-883-5204

Personnel Participate in Region-Wide Exercise

Several members of the Department participated in an annual exercise of the National Capitol Region Incident Management Team (NCR-IMT) from March 6th through March 8th conducted in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

The NCR-IMT provides a cadre of trained, qualified, and experienced command officers and staff to perform command and general staff functions and supporting roles during large, complex, multi-operational period incidents.

The NCR-IMT is a 120 member multi-jurisdictional/multi-disciplinary Type III team comprised of fire and emergency medical services, law enforcement, and public health representatives from the participating Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments jurisdictions. The NCR-IMT's concept of operations is based on "all hazards" and unified command principals that are applicable for any type of natural or man-made disaster, or terrorist attack.

The team participates in quarterly training, as well as position specific training opportunities each year and culminates with the annual exercise that is produced and evaluated by an outside contractor. Several employees from the Fire/EMS Department, as well as other County agencies, participated in this training exercise in anticipation of shadowing missions and deployments as the wildfire and hurricane season approaches. The members included; Major Steve Hess, Major Paul Cruz and Doug Nedab from the Department's Information Management Office. Other agency participants included; Tyrone Wells and Rudy Thomas from the Office of Homeland Security and Jim White from Public Safety Communications.

A COMMAND PERSPECTIVE: Emergency Operations Command

By Acting Lieutenant Colonel Jerome F. LaMoria

Having recently passed the 100 day mark serving as Acting Lieutenant Colonel of the Emergency Operations Command (EOC), I am energized that transition to this position has proven to be one of the most challenging and dynamic experiences of my life.

Acting Chief Marc Bashoor has tasked me with providing a comprehensive assessment of our current operating condition and capabilities. He has also asked that recommendations be developed for the necessary improvements to our system at the command and operational level. Observations since my appointment to this position, as well as from my experience as a command officer, have revealed a number of weaknesses that need to be addressed.

Some of the weaknesses and areas of improvement include: Lack of clearly established expectations for every level of command and operations; Lack of effective resource management and allocation; Absence of a single focus of organizational priorities; and, Absence of a consistent message of vision, acceptable operations, and risk acceptance.

To address these weaknesses and improve overall effectiveness, I have developed a few broad overall organizational objectives; 1) Strengthen the organizational framework of the Emergency Operational Command; 2) Establish clear lines of communication, authority, and responsibility; 3) Communicate expectations, organizational beliefs, and vision; and, 4) Strengthen command and control mechanisms at all levels.

To meet these goals, some of the recent organizational change and movement of personnel within EOC is an effort to establish an improved unity-of-command. Unity-of-command is a principle of the chain of command and simply means that each subordinate reports to one and only one superior. The unity-of-command illustrated through an organizational chart allows us to visualize the lines of authority and communication within an organizational structure and ensures clear assignment of duties and responsibilities.

The establishment of the Northern and Southern Division Commanders (Major Kenneth McSwain Northern Operations Commander and George Michaelides Southern Operations Commander) provides clear and direct supervision of the seven geographical battalions. Career Battalion Chiefs and Volunteer Company Chiefs shall now communicate and report directly to the respective Division Commanders for direct oversight of battalion level matters. Adherence to this decentralizing of authority will allow for more consistent and timely decision making.

The role of the Operational Duty Majors (Duty Chief) is now focused on the control and coordination of resources in meeting the day-to-day challenges of our emergency service delivery. This position is a critical component of the Fire/EMS Department Command Staff with direct responsibility for the core mission of our service. The Duty Chief has the responsibility and full authority to act on emergent issues effecting operations. They initiate key notifications and act as liaison with governmental and regional stakeholders. In addition, each of the Majors assigned to these positions are responsible for critical projects and initiatives that are operational in nature.

To assist with management and administration of personnel assigned to EOC the Fire/Rescue Operations office (FRO) has been restored at the Fire Services Building. This office is staffed with a Battalion Chief and an Administrative Aide to streamline information systems and personnel

administration. This office will become the information hub for EOC on matters of staffing, personnel movement, and related matters.

Another significant change is the reestablishment of the Volunteer Division Chief Program. In concert with the structure of the career component, a Northern and Southern Operations Commander consisting of Volunteer Majors will have direct supervision and oversight for the Volunteer Division Chief Program. The focus of these levels of Volunteer Command Officers will shift from one of merely operational involvement to inclusion of administration and management functions. The Volunteer Division Chiefs, under the direction of the Volunteer Majors, will be responsible for the management and oversight of the Volunteer Battalion Chief Programs. These positions will be directly involved with personnel actions related to the supervision and management of volunteer personnel.

The EOC has taken over responsibility for the Fire/EMS Call Center. Changes coming in the next few weeks and months will reestablish this office as an integral part of Departmental notifications and operations. Call Center personnel will work closely with Fire/Rescue Operations and the Duty Chief to ensure key notifications are made and Departmental information is disseminated.

Additional enhancements and operational changes are currently being explored for implementation. These include areas of resource deployment, command and control measures, and quality assurance. As these and other initiatives come to fruition, personnel will again be faced with change that may be difficult for some. For any organization to make improvements in either processes or outputs, change will be necessary.

It is critical that the organization's leaders provide the essential function of fostering this important change. True leadership requires more than a mass email notice announcing a new initiative; it requires sustained attention throughout the life of the change. Without a consistent, ongoing message about the importance of the initiative, the benefits, the progress, and rewards for success and accountabilities for failures, the initiative is likely to fail. People are inherently comfortable in their known environment and usually resistant to delve into the cloudy unknown or unproven future state. Without sustained responsible leadership, employees will quickly revert to their comfort level and the organization suffers.

It is important to recognize that any change that is truly worthwhile will produce a level of fear and uncertainty. The biggest mistake of organizations and leaders is to avoid this fear. The key to successful leadership is mastering control of fear and harnessing that energy to produce meaningful results. In the book *Corporate Culture and Performance* by J.P. Kotter and J.L. Haskett, the authors state; "Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles" (Kotter, 1992, p. 25).

In closing, I wish to express how deeply grateful I am to you -- our emergency personnel -- who answer the multitude of calls for service each and every day. Your determination, devotion and ability to overcome adversity bear true testimony to your core professionalism. Looking back on the President's Day Weekend weather event, I believe that the experience of that one day serves as a lasting demonstration of the best of what we are able to accomplish even under the most taxing of conditions. While I have always been impressed with the resilience and fortitude of our members, I could not be more proud of the boots on the ground that day and I am honored to be your humble servant.

VOLUNTEER DIVISION CHIEF PROGRAM REINSTITUTED

By Volunteer Major James McClelland

As part of the ongoing improvements and reorganization of the Prince George's County Fire / EMS Department, the Volunteer Division Chief program was reinstated, effective March 27, 2011. These positions were filled through a competitive process and have provided us with some of the most experienced, talented and progressive command officers available.

A total of ten (10) Volunteer Division Chiefs have been appointed and are assigned to the Emergency Operations Command. Volunteer Division Chiefs report directly to two (2) Volunteer Majors that act as the Northern and Southern Division Commanders. Eight (8) Volunteer Division Chiefs are assigned to shifts and two (2) are assigned as alternates.

The Volunteer Division Chiefs are an integral part of the Fire Chief's senior command staff. They will respond to emergencies as warranted and insure that emergency operations are carried out effectively, safely and within Department policies. They will establish or assume command when necessary. In addition to their operational duties, they will be involved in the management of the Volunteer Battalion Chief programs, developing policies and procedures, serving on Volunteer Disciplinary Review Boards and mentoring other command officers.

In addition, one (1) Volunteer Division Chief has been appointed as the Safety Division Chief in the Special Operations Command. The purpose of this position is to manage and strengthen the Volunteer Safety Officer program.

NORTHERN DIVISION

Charles Fusco, Major - Northern Operations Commander

Daniel McCoy, Volunteer Division Chief - A Shift

Johnathan Bolden, Volunteer Division Chief - B Shift

Gary Steen, Volunteer Division Chief - C Shift

Lee Havens, Volunteer Division Chief - D Shift

Randy Kuenzli, Volunteer Division Chief - Alternate

SOUTHERN DIVISION

James McClelland, Major - Southern Operations Commander

Michael Burrier, Volunteer Division Chief - A Shift

Nicholas Finamore, Volunteer Division Chief - B Shift

Michael White, Volunteer Division Chief - C Shift

Anthony Kelleher, Volunteer Division Chief - D Shift

Thomas Stommel, Volunteer Division Chief - Alternate

SAFETY

Stefan Gansert, Safety Division Chief

WELCOME TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF CAREER RECRUIT SCHOOL #43

Joseph W. Allen-Baker

Michael M. Barnett

Michael Bassett

Kelvin L. Benford

Nathan E. Bowie

Chayenne M. Brown

Joshua P. Buckler

Jae H. Chong

Richard H. Clarke, Jr.

Phillip A. Crooks

Romeo Dela Cruz, Jr.

Donnell S. Gaynor

Brian S. Goldfeder

Robert M. Herbert

Cameron D. Jones

Brittany A. Joy

Andrew T. Koch

John C. Kuhn

Mark H. Maloney

Patrick J. Maloney

Sean D. Moorhouse

Philip A. O'Connell

Kacie E. Pressley

Ernest P. Rogers

Michael W. Shackelford

Brandon L. Sims

Ralpheal A. Smith

Chad M. Staley

Justin E. Talley

Spencer K. Taylor

Michael J. Tomasi

Darrin W. Tomlinson

Laura D. Wilcox

VOLUNTEER LEADERS ATTENDED NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE SERVICE SUMMIT

By: Pete Mellits, Deputy Volunteer Fire Chief, Bowie Volunteer Fire Department

William Smith, President of the PGCVFRA, Deputy Volunteer Fire Chief Pete Mellits of the Bowie Volunteer Fire Department, and Tim Tharp, District Heights VFD were recently invited to serve as national representatives to the National Volunteer Fire Service Summit hosted by the International Association of Fire Chief's Volunteer and Combination Officers Section (VCOS)

The goal of the summit was for fire and emergency service leaders to address the challenges facing the volunteer fire service today and explore ways to move volunteer and combination departments forward in the 21st century—inclusive of volunteer, on-call and part-time personnel. Chiefs Smith, Mellits and Tharp were part of just 125 fire and emergency service leaders from the U.S. and Canada who participated in an unprecedented three-day gathering of public safety and other government officials, held from March 17th to the 19th.

"Many volunteer fire departments are at a crossroads: the economy, the increasing demand for local and regional emergency services, new roles in national preparedness and response and changing social norms are creating shifts in the way we do business," said Chief Tim Wall, Chair of the IAFC's Volunteer and Combination Officer's Section. "These changes aren't necessarily good or bad in-and-of themselves, but it's clear that if we are dedicated to continuing our tradition of service and excellence, we need to bring the community together look at what works in this new environment and what new ideas are out there."

Among the topics addressed in the summit were the impact of the new economy, recruitment and retention, firefighter health and safety, local government relations, and national legislative issues impacting volunteers. Participants, who were largely nominated to attend by State and National fire service organizations; spent the majority of the time in smaller group work sessions which were tasked with developing recommendations that will be incorporated into a national report issued by VCOS, later this year.